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Senate

RETIREMENT OF ROBIN BAILEY— Continued

There is only one Robin Bailey. I was fortunate to have the original on my team since I first came to Washington to represent the people of the State of Wyoming in the Senate.

Robin's story and her service in the Senate began in 1977 in Cheyenne. She heard there was an opening on Malcolm Wallop's staff. It sounded like an interesting job. It would give her a chance to work on behalf of the people of Wyoming. She submitted an application for the position of office manager. Fortunately, Malcolm made the perfect choice and added her to his staff. He was fortunate Robin was there to make sure everything was done and done well.

After serving on Malcolm Wallop's staff for a few years, Robin's husband Ron accepted a job in Rock Springs. They packed their bags and moved there. That was not to be the end of Robin's Senate career. In 1984, Senator Al Simpson chose her to take the challenges of his office in Rock Springs. Later, the Baileys moved to Gillette, my hometown, and Senator Simpson just changed where she worked.

Here is where I come in. I will never forget 1996 and the decision my wife Diana and I made to run for the Senate. Things came together for us and soon after the victory parties were over it became apparent I had a bigger issue to contend with—putting my staff together. Now that the campaign had ended I had to make sure we continued to provide the people of Wyoming the support and assistance to which they had come to rely on over the years.

I started to go through the stacks of resumes and then visited with my predecessor Al Simpson. Over the years he put together a remarkable staff. Some of them were willing to stay on. I was delighted Robin Bailey was willing to continue to serve the people of Wyoming out of the Gillette office.

Over the years my staff and I have noticed that Robin has two responses

to most questions. Either she knows the answer or she knows how to find the answer. I don't think anyone has a better or more extensive system of resources and contacts than she does. Having her on my staff came in handy when in 2000 I had to find a new State director. Dee Rodekohr, who was Senator Simpson's State director and then my State director, decided to retire and enjoy all she earned with her service to the people of the State. Fortunately, she and I and all my staff knew we had someone already prepared who would be a perfect fit and it was Robin Bailey.

We extended her duties and we put her in charge of all the State offices. She not only exceeded our expectations, she took everything to the next level. She was a constant source of support, guidance, and direction for the people in my State offices, and she was always there with a word of good advice or suggestion about how to take on a problem. She was a great mentor to my staff—the new ones and the more seasoned veterans because of her great love of and knowledge about Wyoming. She is the kind of resource every office needs to have if we are to do the best possible job of taking care of the people of our home State.

My chief of staff has often said that Robin is the best and most natural supervisor he had ever met, and every day she has been on our staff she has proven the truth of those words and her value as one of my team leaders. Robin is one of the people who stands out from all the rest. She is known and respected by all. She has a talent for not only knowing what is going on in Wyoming but also understanding what it means in the short and long term. Robin has never worked for me. She has always worked with me. That is part of what made her a great asset for Senator Malcolm Wallop, Senator Al Simpson, and me. That makes three generations of Wyoming congressional delegation and family.

She could write a book about being an effective State director. It would be the how-to manual of all time. It would help a person to learn how to be an effective leader, help others, be the eyes and ears of what is happening, and enjoy the job—all at the same time.

A big part of the job has been traveling around the State to see what is going on and how people feel about it. In my office I relied on Robin to travel around Wyoming and represent me at a long list of meetings, hearings, and presentations. We wanted her there because she is a good listener. She not only hears what the people have to say, she has an uncanny sense of understanding what they are driving at and how to best address that. She would let me know what she saw and heard and it was the next best thing to being there myself. You have heard the expression, "You cannot be everywhere at once." Robin has been my solution to that problem.

Her travels allowed her to get to know people in every corner of the State. She not only enjoys meeting people but welcomes the chance to get to know them and to help them with their problems. That is why she has been able to make a difference over the years in more ways than we will ever know.

Her life has not been without challenges, however. One such challenge came about when her husband Ron began to have serious issues with his heart and then Alzheimer's. It was a difficult time for her, but she never complained about what she had to do. She just did it. She honored her commitment to her husband and she continued to provide him with the support, care, and attention that had always been a hallmark of their relationship. When he passed away and she lost this great love of her life, she thought it might be time to consider making changes in the rest of her life as well. When Robin told Diana and me that she felt it was time for her to retire

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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and follow a different path in life, we did what most every one of us would do. We told her to take a few years to make up her mind. Unfortunately, that didn't work and now she is making plans for the next chapter of her life.

She will be spending more time with her family, especially her grandchildren. She has already shown she is a very special—in fact, a spectacular—grandmother. I know her family will enjoy having her take a more active role in their lives.

I know she will continue to make a difference helping others and she will continue to be a great gift for all who know her and for all those she is soon to meet. I don't think Diana and I have ever met someone who is more focused or determined to help others. For Robin every day that is spent making life easier for someone else is a good day.

We are all sorry to see Robin close this chapter of her life, but we know she is doing it for all the right reasons. She said she had reached a point in her life when it seemed to be a time to try something new. We will miss her wealth of resources, knowledge, skills, and abilities that cannot be replaced. Over the years she has set such a high mark of excellence. Her achievements, the milestones she established in my office for outstanding effort and accomplishment, and her determination to make Wyoming a better place to live from one corner to the other will be the legacy of her service to the Senate, to the people, the State of Wyoming, and to our Nation.

In the years to come, each member of my staff will take away a different favorite memory of working with Robin. For my chief of staff it will always be the way in which she brought a solution with her to any discussion of any problem. For others it will be the way she would always find a way to handle an issue no matter how difficult or perplexing or how she seemed to not only be familiar with someone's issue, she also seemed to know almost everyone who was involved. For my part, I will always remember how much it meant to me to know I could ask her to take on an assignment and leave it with her knowing it would be done well. She always found a way to do what was needed and expected and then some more.

Perhaps her greatest gift is her ability to effectively manage time and resources. For Robin it is not a problem if there is only 24 hours in a day because she makes the best use of every minute of every hour.

Good luck, Robin, and may God continue to bless you and all those who come into your life in the years to come. You will be missed, but we will know where to find you. It is good to know you will never be more than a phone call away. We hope you fully enjoy your retirement.

You have earned it and then some.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Thank you, Madam President.

I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SANCTIONS IN VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Thank you, and I know Senator MENENDEZ is going to speak on this topic as well. We intended to come to the Senate floor and offer a unanimous consent agreement to pass sanctions in Venezuela. First of all, let me thank the White House for what they announced yesterday: sanctions against human rights violators and corrupt government officials in Venezuela who have been involved for a very long time—but especially since the 4th of February—in grotesque human rights violations against young people and all people in Venezuela.

It is a topic that is not often talked about unfortunately these days, given all the issues that are going on around the world. What is happening in Venezuela in our own hemisphere is startling.

First, you have the complete erosion of democracy which has been going on since the reign of Hugo Chavez and now with Nicolas Maduro it has gotten progressively worse. We have been seeing this and talking about this since earlier this year, when thousands of young people in Venezuela took to the streets to protest what was happening and they were met with some of the most brutal attacks we have seen in this hemisphere for quite a while. We documented that on the floor consistently.

So beginning from that moment forward, we have worked in this body to seek sanctions against those individuals, against the people responsible for those human rights violations who also happened to be, by the way, incredibly corrupt. I would go so far as to say that almost every major political figure in Venezuela today in the ruling party is corrupt. It is absolutely amazing how these individuals in charge of government in that country are systemically stealing the funds of the Venezuelan people, and the cases are extraordinary.

There are times, for example, when the President of that country—who, by the way, was elected in an illegitimate election—is benefiting from the currency exchange rate and manipulating that, top-level members of his Cabinet are skimming off the top of the country's oil company and pocketing money, and what is even more outrageous about that is that they and the people who surround them in the private sector are taking those funds and investing them and enjoying them here in the United States of America.

So I felt for a very long time—as have my colleagues—that this was an important issue that needed to be addressed, and it needed to be addressed

by sanctioning those individuals and we have named many of them. So yesterday the White House announced that many of these individuals will now be denied visas to travel to the United States. In fact, just yesterday a government official from Venezuela who was headed here toward America was not able to come because of these visa sanctions.

So we are grateful for that, and we are grateful for the administrations' implementation of this. But while we are grateful for the denial of visas, it does not go far enough. We also need to sanction their assets. That is why earlier this year I, in conjunction with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and Senators NELSON, MCCAIN, and KIRK proposed legislation to authorize both visa restrictions and also financial sanctions against these individuals, and we have been extraordinarily patient in working through the process to ensure that happens.

The ranking member of the committee, the Senator of Tennessee Mr. CORKER had initial reservations about it, and they were legitimate reservations, and as a result the chairman was kind and wise enough to hold a hearing where we heard testimony about the reality on the ground in Venezuela.

We then proceeded to vote on this in the committee, and the committee voted and approved it by a vote of 13 to 2, if I recall correctly, and that happened on May 22.

Then we patiently worked with our colleagues to try to bring this to the floor, understanding that with all the issues going on it would be difficult to schedule a rollcall vote on it, but we would try to pass it by a process in the Senate we call unanimous consent, where we ask all of our colleagues to approve it and we worked patiently to do that. While he had initial reservations earlier this week, Senator CORKER lifted those reservations and I thank him for that and the way he has taken this so seriously and his cooperation in that matter.

My intention this evening was to come to the Senate floor and ask for unanimous consent of this body to pass this resolution, but some of my colleagues expressed concern about some of the costs that are potentially embedded in this. Let me explain those costs for point of clarification. There were two, in general.

The first was a \$15 million funding for a democracy program in Venezuela, which I believe is a worthy endeavor. But for purposes of overcoming those objections and getting this done, I agreed, and I think the other sponsors did as well, that we would be willing to suspend that in an effort to get this accomplished.

The second is a little bit more nebulous. The second describes administrative costs basically for identifying these assets and implementing the sanctions. The costs are not unique to this. They are not real costs in the way you and I would think of costs. You